

A MOVING EXPERIENCE

A short comedy

by

Ken Preuss

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Synopsis

A newly dating college couple meets in a dorm to prepare for a move. She is packing for a summer in Spain. He is hoping to find out where things stand. As they fill up boxes and open up about emotions, their comical conversations, confrontations, and confessions explore past loves, present feelings, and future plans.

Setting

A college dorm room scattered with boxes for packing.

Characters

SHE – academically inclined, rational about relationships

HE – comically insecure, romantically hopeful

A MOVING EXPERIENCE

The curtain rises on a dorm room being packed up for the summer. There is a bed, a desk, an end table with a lamp, and several boxes are scattered throughout. SHE stands on the bed having just removed a bulletin board from the wall. It features a map of Spain and an assortment of flag-tipped pins used to mark places one plans to visit. She admires the board, sets it down, and begins removing the pins. When they start to slip from her grasp, she grabs a small Teddy bear from the bed and begins using it as a pincushion. There is a knock on the door.

SHE. *(Calling out.)* Who is it?

HE. *(In a Shakespearian voice off stage.)* “By a name I know not how to tell thee who I am.” *(She smiles, sets the bear down, goes to the door, and opens it. She sees no one.)*

SHE. *(Looking right, calling down the hall.)* What are you doing?

HE. *(From a short distance.)* Looking at the stars. Want to join me?

SHE. I’ve seen them.

HE. Don’t you want to take one last look at them together?

SHE. You’re the romantic, not me. Remember? *(She steps back in, realizes he is not following her, returns, and calls out.)* Are you going to stare off the balcony all night?

HE. Just for a couple more minutes. *(A beat, then dramatically.)* After that, I’m going to jump.

SHE. *(Unphased.)* Do you think you could postpone your death long enough to help me pack?

HE. *(HE appears at the doorway.)* Well, I suppose I could jump after you’ve gone. *(Hands her a half dozen roses.)* Have someone put these on my grave when I’m dead.

SHE. You’re a schmuck.

HE. *(Enters.)* I’m going to miss that word.

SHE. I promise to begin all my e-mails “Dear Schmuck.”

HE. And you said you weren’t romantic.

SHE. Thanks for coming over to help tonight. (*Holds up flowers.*)
Thanks for these, too. (*Looks around the room.*)

HE. (*Sensing her confusion.*) Are you looking for something to put them in?

SHE. (*Correcting his grammar.*) “Are you looking for something in which to put them?”

HE. (*He winces. This is obviously not the first time she has corrected him.*) Do you have to correct everything I say?

SHE. Only those things you say incorrectly. (*Crosses to a small refrigerator.*)

HE. Why do you do it?

SHE. (*She opens a water bottle or two and places the flowers into them.*) It’s just something up with which I grew. Every family has its vice. Some parents smoke. Some parents drink. Mine spoke proper English.

HE. I can see them now. Calling in sick after long nights of conjugating verbs. Throwing away every spare cent on dictionaries and thesauruses.

SHE. It’s a harmless habit.

HE. It’s an annoying habit. Almost as annoying as inviting people over to move heavy boxes.

SHE. All you have to do is help me fill them. My dad will be doing the moving.

HE. Your dad’s coming?

SHE. First thing in the morning. Most of my stuff’s already packed. All we have to do is throw whatever’s left into boxes.

HE. And label them grammatically correct.

SHE. (*Corrects him.*) “Correctly.”

HE. (*Sits on the bed. Sighs.*) I still can’t believe you’re leaving tomorrow.

SHE. I’ll be touring Spain for six weeks. I’ll be back and in an apartment before you even know how it feels to have me gone.

HE. You haven’t even left yet, and I already know how it feels to have you gone. (*Finds the Teddy bear with the pins in its head. He holds it up.*) It feels like this.

SHE. (*Embarrassed.*) Oops.

HE. Maybe even a little more painful. (*Looks at the bear again. Shakespeare.*) “Alas, poor Yogi. I knew him, Horatio.”

SHE. It won't be that bad. Trust me.

HE. You turn Teddy bears into voodoo dolls, and you want me to trust you?

SHE. You'll be fine when I'm gone.

HE. (*Slightly defensive.*) I think I know how I'm going to feel. What I don't know is how you're going to feel.

SHE. (*Sighs.*) Let's not start this now.

HE. I just want to know what's going to happen to us.

SHE. I don't want to worry about it.

HE. You don't have to. I'll worry enough for the both of us. All you have to do is talk.

SHE. I don't want to talk about it either.

HE. Could you text me a few emoticons so I have something to go on?

SHE. Maybe later. Come on. Get up. (*She reaches down to pull him up.*)

HE. (*Pulls her down beside him.*) This is our last night together. I've made my feelings clear for a month now. The least you can do is give me some kind of clue as to where I stand with you.

SHE. (*Evasively.*) You're my... companion.

HE. Companion? My dog is my companion. If I had these feelings for my dog, I'd be arrested.

SHE. (*Stands and crosses away.*) I need to finish packing. I don't have time to sit around and talk about my feelings.

HE. You should try it sometime. It can do wonders for relationships.

SHE. You're being a schmuck.

HE. Why? Because I'm willing to talk about my feelings?

SHE. No. Because you're willing to rely on them. That's all that matters to you. You're like one giant emotion. Your brain has been taken hostage somewhere, and your heart is processing everything.

HE. Feelings come from here, (*Points to his heart.*) not here. (*Points to his head.*) If everyone viewed relationships like you do, we'd all be sending each other Valentines with little brains drawn all over them.

SHE. You can't have a relationship without reason. You need to look at things logically once in a while. Relying on feelings doesn't solve things. It only complicates them.

HE. You're saying I'm the one who complicates things?

SHE. That's exactly what I'm saying. You have no idea what it's been like seeing you the last couple of nights. You look at me with these big eyes that tear up every time I mention the fact that I'm leaving, and you beg me to tell you everything is going to be okay when I'm gone. I've tried to discuss the subject rationally, but you want it emotionally... in some big display of passion that's impossible for me to provide. What do want me to tell you? That I'll be faithful while we're apart? That I'll write you every day? That I'll hurry home so we can live happily ever after?

HE. That'd be perfect. I'd settle for two out of three.

SHE. (*Crossing to him.*) Look. I know this isn't an ideal situation. I'm sorry that I'm going away just as things are getting started, but I've been planning this trip for almost a year. I have to go. I *want* to go. That doesn't mean I'm happy about leaving.

HE. What *does* it mean then?

SHE. It means... we'll have to wait and see. (*Sits beside him.*) We've known each other for four weeks. I care about you, and I love the fact that you care about me. I'm just not ready to make any promises. I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but promises usually get broken, and broken promises usually lead to broken hearts.

HE. That's pleasant.

SHE. No, it's unpleasant. But it's true. And, right now, I don't want to deal with either one.

HE. (*Thinks for a beat.*) Why am I here tonight? Is it just to help you pack?

SHE. (*Playfully.*) Oh, no. I have other plans for you tonight.

HE. (*With a sudden smile.*) Really? Care to fill me in?

SHE. Not yet. (*Holds up an empty box.*) Care to fill this box?

HE. (*Sighs and stands.*) Where do we start?

SHE. The closet.

HE. (*Crossing to look.*) You haven't packed your clothes?

SHE. I've packed my clothes. I haven't packed my books.

HE. (*Peeking in.*) My God. This could take months. Why don't we leave the books where they are and donate the entire room to the library?

SHE. What do you have against reading?

HE. Nothing. I just think there are other forms of stimulation.

SHE. Well, why don't we try a little physical exercise? You bring them out. I'll box them up.

HE. (*He crosses in. Mock surprise.*) What? No romance novels?

SHE. Not in my collection. A doofus I dated bought me one once. I put it through the paper shredder at work. (*He arrives with a stack of books, sets them down, and gives her a look.*) Don't tell me you never destroyed something that reminded you of an ex. (*He turns and heads for more.*) That's it. Don't tell me. (*She places a few books in the box then pauses.*) I'm going to need a few things to read on the plane. I'll just set them on the bed for the time being.

HE. (*In a dramatic radio announcer voice.*) The Time-Being! Who is this mysterious stranger? Why are people arranging their lives around him? (*A woman's voice.*) I'll put these paper clips here for The Time-Being. (*A man's voice.*) I'm a Philosophy major for The Time-Being. (*A heroic musical interlude.*) Dun dun dun! (*A booming robotic voice.*) I am The Time-Being! Give me those paper clips. Philosophy majors come with me!

SHE. (*A slight smile.*) That was almost witty.

HE. (*Sits, out of breath.*) Thanks.

SHE. Can we get back to work now?

HE. Sure. (*Removes a small notebook from back pocket.*) As soon as I write that down.

SHE. Do you have to do that this second?

HE. If I don't, I might forget something that might be useful.

SHE. Can it wait until we're done packing?

HE. Not a rat's chance in a cat farm.

SHE. What?

HE. (*Pointing out the quote in the notebook.*) "Not a rat's chance in a cat farm." It's a phrase I came up with.

SHE. (*Correcting him.*) It's a phrase up with which I came.

HE. That's really annoying.

SHE. So is that.

HE. What?

SHE. The interruption of normal activities to make verbatim accounts of any whimsical remark you happen to make in conversation.

HE. I'm a writer. This is a writer's notebook. When a writer gets an important idea, he writes it in the writer's notebook. (*He begins to write.*)

SHE. There's a story about a similarly pompous remark.

HE. Enlighten me.

SHE. (*She continues going through the books as she speaks. She places some in the box and tosses some on the bed, sometimes changing her mind.*) One afternoon, Albert Einstein was walking through the park with a brash young gentleman. Every few minutes the brash young gentleman removed a small notebook from his pocket and scribbled something in it. When the twosome reached their destination, Einstein finally inquired as to the purpose of the practice. "I carry the notebook with me at all times," explained the brash young gentleman. "And whenever I get important ideas, I write them in the notebook." Whereby Einstein replied.... (*She pauses, trying to recall the exact phrasing.*)

HE. (*Supplies his own ending.*) "Someday a girl will recount this story to make a point but will be unable to finish it because she has no notebook to write important things in."

SHE. (*Corrects him.*) "In which to write important things."

HE. I was making a joke. Punch lines are not required to be grammatically correct.

SHE. Or, in your case, funny.

HE. (*Smirks and closes his notebook.*) What did Einstein really say?

SHE. He said, "Young man, I never have important ideas."

HE. I like my answer better. (*Notices the stack of books on the bed.*) You're taking all these books on the plane?

SHE. They don't have book limits.

HE. No. But they do have weight limits. You read too much. (*He notices one of the books on the bed.*) World geography? You're going to read a textbook on the plane?

SHE. I thought I would catch up on a few of the chapters we skipped in class.

HE. You should have skipped all the chapters. Better yet, you should have skipped all the classes.

SHE. Why would you say that?

HE. It's a useless subject. The only time geography comes up in real life is on game shows.

SHE. Can you name the capitals of all fifty states?

HE. *(Laughs it off.)* Not at the moment.

SHE. You should have memorized them. I've always found men with knowledge of geography to be incredibly sexy.

HE. *(Frantically.)* Montgomery, Alabama... *(He tries to think of another.)*

SHE. *(Offering him help.)* Juneau, Alaska...

HE. *(As if she'd asked "Do you know Alaska?")* I don't know any of them! *(Flips through the geography book furiously.)*

SHE. *(Places the last few books into the box. Grabs the stack from the bed.)* The books are packed. *(Sarcastically.)* Thanks for the help.

HE. *(Still looking for capitals.)* Uh, sure.

SHE. *(Takes the stack from the bed to her carry-on.)* These are not going to fit.

HE. Why don't you leave a few in this country?

SHE. Move closer to the lamp if you're going to read. The lighting in here is atrocious. *(To herself.)* I can make room. I'll just unpack some things that aren't essential. *(She begins to look through the clothes in the carry-on, tossing a few items to the bed.)*

HE. *(Glances at the clothes that land beside him.)* It's so hard for a traveler to be both well-read and well-dressed. *(He notices a provocative top. He lifts it up, smiles for a moment, sets it down, and returns to his book. After a beat, he grabs the top and moves to her as she sets books into her bag.)* What's this?

SHE. Where did you get that?

HE. You threw it on the bed.

SHE. I meant to leave it in here.

HE. You're going to wear that in Spain?

SHE. Yes.

HE. What about me?

SHE. I don't think you should wear it in any country.

HE. I'm serious.

SHE. So am I. (*She holds it to his chest.*) It's not you.

HE. (*He grabs it.*) I suppose you have a reason for wearing this.

SHE. I have a reason for doing everything.

HE. I know. I just can't figure any of them out. (*A sudden idea.*) You have a boyfriend over there, don't you? Some kinky conquistador with a tattoo of the world on his chest and a grammatically perfect vocabulary.

SHE. (*Calmly.*) The top is light. Spain is hot. I'll be wearing it to keep cool in the summer heat.

HE. (*Slightly embarrassed.*) So, you don't have a boyfriend?

SHE. No.

HE. With clothes like this? (*Hands it back.*) Maybe it's your personality.

SHE. (*Puts it in the bag.*) You seem a little tense. Would you like a cold drink?

HE. That would be great.

SHE. Grab one quick. I unplugged the fridge four hours ago.

HE. Thanks. (*He goes to the fridge, opens the door, grabs a can, and closes the door quickly. He looks at what he has.*) "Atomic Jolt?"

SHE. (*Slightly alarmed.*) That's a discontinued energy drink. I wouldn't drink that.

HE. I'm guessing that's why it's still here.

SHE. There used to be four of them. They're not really fit for human consumption.

HE. Where does it say that? (*Pretends to see something on the can.*) Ah here it is... (*Shakespeare.*) "Such soon-speeding gear as will disperse itself through all the veins that the life-weary taker will fall dead."

SHE. That's not that far from the truth. (*She takes the can from him, sets it aside, and sits him on the bed.*) Let me tell you a story about Atomic Jolt.

HE. This one doesn't involve Albert Einstein does it?

SHE. No. This one involves men of much lower caliber.

HE. Men you've dated.

SHE. How did you know?

HE. You only have two kinds of stories: Ones in which you're quoting geniuses, and ones in which you're dating doofuses.

SHE. I'm sure you have stories about doofuses you've dated. (*He doesn't answer. She begins.*) In the beginning of the semester, there was a four pack of Atomic Jolt. Three doofuses opened three cans on three separate occasions. None of the cans were fully consumed.

HE. They got sick?

SHE. The first two got sick. The third one got stupid, and I got sick of him.

HE. If the stuff is so bad, why did you keep it?

SHE. One has to have some way of ridding oneself of doofuses.

HE. One shouldn't invite doofuses into one's room in the first place.

SHE. I don't invite doofuses into my room. They become doofuses after they get here.

HE. Am I becoming one?

SHE. No. You're still a schmuck.

HE. Thanks. I think. (*A beat.*) What exactly is a schmuck anyway?

SHE. A schmuck is someone who meets a girl in a lunch line then gets down on one knee to ask her out on a first date.

HE. I dropped my fork. I figured while I was down there...

SHE. A schmuck is someone, who on the first date, strolls by a fountain, takes out two pennies, and gives a girl a crash course on wishing.

HE. Can you name all the ways I taught you to wish?

SHE. Not at the moment.

HE. You should have memorized them. I've always found women with knowledge of wishing to be incredibly sexy.

SHE. What would you have done if I named them?

HE. Torn off my shirt and begged to be your love slave.

SHE. Torn off your shirt? (*Smiles.*) My loss. (*Bends to lift the box of books off the floor.*)

HE. (*Helps her lift it to the desk.*) Did you really wish that night, or were you humoring me?

SHE. I wished.

HE. What for?

SHE. (*Laughs.*) “For what.” Two words, and you still got the preposition in the wrong place.

HE. For what did you wish?

SHE. If I tell you, it won’t come true.

HE. You used my penny. That makes it okay to tell me. It’s one of the rules.

SHE. Where do you get these rules?

HE. They were written by wizards and passed down through generations to the most scholarly of schmucks.

SHE. I think you make them up.

HE. They’re all authentic rules practiced for centuries.

SHE. Wishing on digital clocks for instance?

HE. Some have been practiced for more centuries than others. (*A beat.*) I’m surprised you remember that one.

SHE. I’m a surprising girl.

HE. So what was your wish?

SHE. World peace.

HE. World peace?

SHE. I always wish for world peace. Unless, I haven’t eaten, in which case, I wish to end world hunger. For what did you wish?

HE. I wished for a second date.

SHE. You’re a schmuck.

HE. So my wish wasn’t as noble as yours. At least mine came true.

SHE. But look how hard you had to work for it. (*Points around the room.*) You bought me flowers. You gave me teddy bears. (*Laughs.*) You bought me more flowers.

HE. I got the second date didn’t I?

SHE. Your persistence got you the second date. The penny in the fountain had nothing to do with it.

HE. That’s your opinion. I, for one, believe in divine intervention.

SHE. If you work for it, there’s nothing divine involved. Next time you make a wish, wish for something you can’t get even if you work for it.

HE. Like a Porsche or a good hairstyle...

SHE. Exactly. If you get it without any work, we’ll consider it divine intervention.

HE. So I work for my wishes. There's nothing wrong with a little effort to help shape destiny. (*Shakespeare.*) "Men at sometimes are the masters of their own fate."

SHE. (*She places desk items into the book box. He helps.*) Not where wishes are concerned. Men should be able to wish without having to work. That's why I wish for world peace or the end of world hunger. I've supported to these causes. I've attended socially conscious rock concerts. I've donated money to charitable websites. There's little more I can do as an individual to solve these problems. So I wish. I don't work. I don't worry. I just say the words and wait. If the wish comes true, wonderful. If it doesn't, I don't feel responsible for the result.

HE. (*Smiles and grabs his notebook.*) I should write that down. You've got the most amazing philosophies. (*He looks up as she bends over.*) You also have the most amazing... (*She turns and catches him looking.*)... eyes.

SHE. I think that's enough packing for now. What are we going to do with the rest of the evening?

HE. I believe you said you had other plans for me tonight.

SHE. So I did.

HE. Why don't we get started on those?

SHE. Why don't we? (*She sits on the bed and pats her hand to the side, indicating where she would like him to sit. He looks around pretending not to know whom she's summoning. Seeing no one else, he points to himself. She nods. He loosens his collar, crosses, and sits beside her.*)

HE. So. What are we going to do?

SHE. My plan involves doing something we've never done before.

HE. I think I can handle it.

SHE. Great. (*She sits back casually.*) I want you to tell me something about yourself that I don't know.

HE. That's your plan?

SHE. Part of it. I just want to get to know you a little more before we move on to phase two.

HE. I'm not really in the mood to talk about my life right now.

SHE. You're never in the mood to talk about your life. I know virtually nothing about you.

HE. Why are you so interested in my past?

SHE. Why are you so afraid of it? Think about how many questions you've avoided.

HE. I've answered plenty of questions.

SHE. You've answered the standard questions like "Any brothers or sisters?" and "From where do you come?" But you've purposely avoided any inquiry that was remotely personal. I ask a personal question, and you cease all forms of communication until I change the subject. It's a very disturbing pattern. I think you may have some deep-rooted psychological disorder.

HE. So that's it. I've put up with the barrage of questions, thinking that it was a natural step in the building of our relationship. But no! The prying into my past has nothing to do with romance. I'm just the guinea pig in some sort of psycho-schmuck analysis. (*Lies back on the bed like a patient.*) Any more questions, doc?

SHE. How many lovers have you had?

HE. (*Sits up quickly.*) When did this conversation suddenly switch subjects?

SHE. The moment you draped yourself seductively across the bed.

HE. (*Almost to himself.*) I should have tried that sooner.

SHE. The conversation hasn't changed. I was simply proving my point about your unwillingness to discuss your past.

HE. I see. So you're not really interested in the number from a personal standpoint?

SHE. There's a part of me that's curious.

HE. Which part?

SHE. See. You won't answer. Why is that?

HE. I'm just afraid that revealing the number of lovers I've had might affect the chances of you and I becoming lovers.

SHE. That's not going to happen.

HE. (*A confused beat.*) What's not going to happen? You and I are not going to become lovers or my answer is not going to affect the chances of you and I becoming lovers?

SHE. You're stalling.

HE. Maybe I'm counting. (*He waits a beat then crosses away.*) I think I'm going to open that drink.

SHE. Why? Because you're nervous?

HE. Because I'm thirsty. (*He opens the can.*)

SHE. So you're not nervous?

HE. Nope.

SHE. Then why won't you open up?

HE. I'll open up. Just give me a minute.

SHE. I've given you all night. The only thing you've opened up is that can.

HE. (*Pauses. Sets it down without sipping.*) Look. I'm not afraid to open up. I just don't see how revealing the intimate details of my life is going to do either one of us any good.

SHE. In other words, you're hiding something.

HE. I'm not hiding anything. I'm not in the Witness Relocation Program. I have never been someone famous in another life. And although I have strong gut feelings, I have no proof that aliens are living among us. I lead a basically boring, horribly humdrum life. If you sat down to write a song about all the interesting things that have happened to me, you'd end up with an instrumental.

SHE. I'd still like you to tell me about them.

HE. There's nothing to tell. I've had good times. I've had bad times. I've had girlfriends... who incidentally played key roles in most of those bad times. And now, all I have are memories. Memories that I really don't want to let go.

SHE. I'm not asking you to let go of them. I'm asking you to open up and share them. There's a difference.

HE. I know. I just don't like sharing memories with people. I like sharing experiences: Moments that happen once in a lifetime and then are gone. And in those moments, I open up. I share every-thing. My thoughts, my fears, my dreams, my desires. But when the moment ends, and the experience becomes a memory, the sharing stops. I pick up the pieces, sort them out, and lock them away. My memories are like mementos to me. Every one of them holds some special significance,

and each time I'm careless enough to take one out and share it with someone, it becomes a little less sacred. Can you understand that?

SHE. (*A short sigh.*) I understand fine.

HE. So you're not mad at me?

SHE. No.

HE. You sound mad.

SHE. Well, I'm not. I'm just disappointed. I guess this whole thing was wrong from the start.

HE. What was?

SHE. This was. You and me. Us.

HE. Us? I wasn't even sure there was an "us."

SHE. Well, I wasn't sure either. But I had hope. For a while there, I was actually starting to envision us moving past the companion stage. For a few fleeting moments, I was starting to believe we stood a chance. But I don't think we do. I don't think we stand a rat's chance in a cat farm. And you know why?

HE. Because you won't let me get close to you?

SHE. I won't let *you* get close? I'm not the one with the Master Lock on my memory chest.

HE. No. You're the one with the curiosity and the crowbar.

SHE. Look. I'm not after your precious memories if that's what you think. I'm not trying to break in and destroy what's important to you. All I want is a little insight: An ounce of reassurance to convince me that there's really something here. But obviously, that's too much for which to ask. You give me no reassurance. That's why we don't stand a chance.

HE. I give you no reassurance? (*Points to the flowers.*) What do you call these?

SHE. They're roses.

HE. Roses are reassuring.

SHE. No, roses are romantic. Romance is not reassuring. It shows me what you feel, but it doesn't show me what you're like. It only clouds the picture.

HE. Let me get this straight. (*Takes notebook from his pocket.*) Don't talk about your feelings: It complicates things. Don't make romantic

gestures: It clouds the picture. (*Starts to write.*) This is your advice on relationships? Show no emotion and don't bring gifts. It sounds like holiday instructions for the Grinch. (*Holds up notebook.*) This will be perfect for your shelf. It certainly doesn't read like a Harlequin.

SHE. No, it doesn't. And you know why? Because this is the real world. It's not some romance novel. It's about time you stop treating it like one.

HE. I don't.

SHE. Oh no? Take a look around this room. It looks like a Hallmark Shop. You gallop in here like some knight in shining armor, bearing gifts and doing everything you can to sweep me into the safety of your arms, but you never pause for a moment to consider the possibility that I may not want to be rescued. You live in this fairy tale world where it's unfathomable for someone to be content with simple courtship. You pick flowers. You write poems. You recite Shakespeare. You can make this affair as romantic as you want. You can slay a dragon if you feel like it. But you can't force me to write a happy ending.

HE. (*Sits on bed, visibly hurt by her words.*) I wasn't trying to force you into anything.

SHE. I know. But you've got to realize that you can do things for the right reasons and still get the wrong results. (*Takes a calming breath.*) Look, I don't hate your romantic gestures. I actually think the things you do for me are sweet. And I'm not saying we can never talk about our feelings. It just can't be *all* we talk about. If you want to give me reassurance, I need you to do it for real, without all the storybook gimmicks. (*She sits beside him.*) I used to be more receptive to all this romantic stuff. I really was. It's just that I've been fooled more than once into thinking there was something to a relationship when there really wasn't. I enjoyed being swept off my feet, but it always led to a painful fall. If this is going to work, and I really want it to, we need to start off on equal footing. I've shown you exactly who I am. For some strange reason, this hasn't scared you away. I just want to find out who you are.

HE. (*Quietly.*) What does it matter? You're still going to leave.

SHE. Yes. But I'd love to have a real reason to come back.

(He looks at her. She smiles. He smiles back. They share a quiet moment.)

HE. So. What do I do now?

SHE. Just be yourself and convince me that we're compatible.

HE. *(He repeats her words.)* Be yourself and convince me that we're compatible. *(A little laugh.)* That sounded like a cheesy line on a reality dating show.

SHE. I don't watch reality dating shows.

HE. Oh. Hey! I don't watch them either. We're compatible already.

SHE. *(Laughs.)* So, everything's perfect then?

HE. Well, there are still a few things that need work. You won't talk about the future. I won't talk about the past. You view every-thing rationally. I view everything emotionally. You speak perfect English. I dangle every preposition I can think of. But overall, I'd say we're compatible. It's not like our families are feuding or any-thing. *(Picks up the energy drink - holds it up. A toast.)* To "Us"!

SHE. *(Quickly.)* Are you sure you want to risk that?

HE. The old me would have been a little afraid. This is the new improved compatible me.

SHE. The new you?

HE. Yep. The one with the courage to be himself. The one with the courage to shun romanticism. The one with the courage to drink the dreaded Atomic Jolt Energy Drink of Death! *(He chugs a big gulp, makes an unpleasant face.)* Mmm.

SHE. Since this is the new you, how about answering a few of those questions about your past?

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